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7 November 63

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : A-12 Range Performance

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1. After a lengthy discussion with [] and after reviewing the program from the standpoint of what is known and what remains to be known about the parameters which directly affect range performance, it is deemed inadvisable at this time to request LAC to update their estimated A-12 mission range using the increased gross weight and the suspected increased fuel consumption. Until the drag of the aircraft is determined from flight test, any degrading of mission range because of increased gross weight and fuel consumption would be very misleading and conceivably could result in unwarranted decisions regarding the future of the program.

2. Although it is known that the gross weight has increased, and unofficial statements from P&W have indicated that the fuel consumption under normal cruise conditions may be higher than the engine specification fuel consumption, Kelly Johnson has suggested that in the low supersonic range, certain of the flight test data have indicated a possibly lower drag than was estimated. However, until the A-12 reaches and is flown at its design speed and altitude for a sufficient time to obtain flight test drags, no firm conclusion can be reached. It is however evident that a lower-than-estimated drag would offset part or perhaps all of the range reduction due to increased weight and fuel consumption.

3. The program is presently faced with a serious engine life problem, i.e., having engines fly for more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 hours without a malfunction. Furthermore, once design conditions have been reached, an extensive training period will be required to demonstrate and assure that a successful $10\frac{1}{2}$ hour mission can be flown. There will, consequently, be more than adequate time during this interim to develop meaningful operational missions after the drag is firmly defined.

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